

CRP Acreage Eligibility Estimates under the Proposed Rule

The attached table displays USDA estimates of the number of acres that will be eligible for Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) enrollment in each State under the proposed rule issued by USDA on September 23, 1996. Eligible lands under the proposed rule include (1) lands with an erodibility index (EI) of 8 or more, (2) lands located in national conservation priority areas, (3) lands subject to scour erosion, (4) cropped wetlands and adjacent upland buffers, (5) filterstrips and riparian buffers adjacent to water bodies, (6) salinity-impaired lands, (7) lands in State-designated conservation priority areas, and (8) lands devoted to permanent wildlife habitat, contour grass strips, field windbreaks, shelterbelts, grass waterways, wellhead protection areas, living snow fences, and certain wetland types of expiring Water Bank Program acres which producers can enroll regardless of erodibility.

There is uncertainty about the number of acres that will be eligible from conservation priority areas designated by States and approved by USDA (criteria # 7). Up to 10 percent of the cropland in each State can be designated as a conservation priority area, allowing for cropland included in national conservation priority areas (assumed to include cropland in the Chesapeake Bay, Great Lakes, and Long Island Sound basins). There are potentially up to about 33 million acres of additional eligibility nationwide in State-designated conservation priority areas.

Estimates of eligible acreage under criteria # 8 are not included because of the uncertain location or extent that producers may choose

to enroll land in these specific practices in the CRP.

Calculation of the Estimates

- USDA used two sources of information to develop the estimates of eligible acres: (1) the 1992 National Resources Inventory (NRI), and (2) a 5-percent sample of CRP contracts. The NRI, conducted by the Natural Resources Conservation Service every 5 years, provides a comprehensive national database for determining status, conditions, and trends of natural resources on the Nation's non-Federal land. The 5-percent sample of CRP contracts was a one-time investigation of information contained in CRP contract files maintained in NRCS county offices.¹
- Information from USDA's nationally maintained CRP contract database and the results of the sample of contract files were used for estimating the number of CRP signups 1-12 acres that would meet the proposed erodibility criteria ($EI \geq 8$), while the

¹ NRI sample points were selected using a probability based 2-stage stratified sampling technique, covers all non-Federal lands, and is not limited to CRP lands. The 5-percent sample of CRP contracts was drawn as a random sample of sign-up 1-9 CRP contracts located in local NRCS offices as of late 1992. Both of the samples contain approximately 17,000 CRP observations.

1992 NRI was used for estimating the amount of CRP signup 1-12 acres that would meet the other criteria considered.²

- The NRI was also used for estimating the amount of total cropland that would be eligible nationwide under the proposed criteria. The NRI estimates are not intended to reflect how current CRP fields would fare under the proposed criteria.
- Using the 5-percent sample provides information directly on EI values for current CRP fields. These can be compared with the proposed erodibility standard using the weighted average of the EI's of the soils in the field.
- The estimates of eligible acreage derived from both of these sources provide useful information during the comment period of the proposed rule, but have no bearing on the actual eligibility of any land that may be eventually offered for enrollment. When CRP signup opportunities resume, eligibility determinations will be made by NRCS based on the characteristics of the land being offered for enrollment.

Estimated Ineligible and Eligible Acres

- Based on the data sources described above, it is estimated that about 8.3 million of the 36.4 million CRP signup 1-12 acres may not meet the $EI \geq 8$ standard and that a minimum of about 1.1 million of these acres could be eligible under the other criteria. (This number is a minimum because it does not include lands in State conservation priority areas or lands that could be devoted to certain practices, such as permanent wildlife habitat, contour grass strips, field windbreaks, shelterbelts, grass waterways, wellhead protection areas, and living snow fences.) This leaves up to 7.2 million CRP acres (20 percent) that could be ineligible for future enrollment under the proposed criteria.
- For all U.S. cropland, it is estimated that between 152 million acres and 185 million acres (cultivated cropland plus land already under CRP contract) would be eligible under the proposed rule. The lower, or "minimum", estimate represents lands that would be eligible without including land in State-designated priority areas, while the higher, or "maximum", estimate assumes that all the land that could be included in State-designated priority areas represent additional eligible acres.

² There have been some changes in enrollment since the 36.4 million acres enrolled during signups 1-12. However, such changes have been slight, and no attempt to account for these changes is included in the estimates presented.

ESTIMATED ELIGIBILITY OF CURRENT CRP and ALL CULTIVATED CROPLAND UNDER PROPOSED CRITERIA

SOURCES: 1992 NATIONAL RESOURCES INVENTORY and 5-PERCENT SAMPLE OF CRP CONTRACTS

State	CRP Acres Contracted, Signups 1-12					All Cultivated Cropland Plus CRP		
	All Contracts, (Acres Contracted Signups 1-12)	Estimated Eligible Contracts			Estimated Maximum Ineligible (Excludes State Conserv. Priority Areas 2/)	Total	Estimated Eligible	
		Contracts with EI≥8	Contracts with EI<8	Minimum Eligible			Minimum	Maximum
			(Meeting Other Criteria 1/, but Excluding State Conserv. Priority Areas 2/)	(Total EI≥8 Plus EI<8)			(Excludes State Conserv. Priority Areas 2/)	(Includes Potential State Conserv. Priority Areas 2/)
		(1,000 acres)					(1,000 acres)	
ALABAMA	573	476	26	502	71	3,380	1,420	1,760
ALASKA	25	na	na	na	na	na	na	na
ARIZONA	0	0	0	0	0	990	810	910
ARKANSAS	260	174	18	192	68	7,680	1,960	2,730
CALIFORNIA	188	183	0	183	5	6,560	1,950	2,610
COLORADO	1,978	1,824	0	1,824	154	9,570	7,860	8,820
CONNECTICUT	0	0	0	0	0	90	60	70
DELAWARE	1	0	1	1	0	490	490	490
FLORIDA	135	94	0	94	41	1,820	280	460
GEORGIA	706	314	20	334	372	5,410	900	1,440
HAWAII	0	na	na	na	na	230	na	na
IDAHO	877	767	1	769	108	5,240	2,370	2,890
ILLINOIS	812	745	7	752	60	23,990	5,540	7,930
INDIANA	463	358	46	404	59	13,220	4,780	5,860
IOWA	2,225	1,969	26	1,995	230	25,590	8,690	11,250
KANSAS	2,938	2,418	11	2,429	509	27,850	10,870	13,650
KENTUCKY	451	440	3	444	8	3,850	2,360	2,740
LOUISIANA	147	98	45	143	4	5,930	4,330	4,920
MAINE	38	35	0	35	3	200	80	100
MARYLAND	20	13	7	20	0	1,470	1,470	1,470
MASSACHUSETTS	0	0	0	0	0	70	20	30
MICHIGAN	333	129	203	333	0	7,150	6,930	6,960
MINNESOTA	1,929	804	112	916	1,013	20,680	4,220	6,280
MISSISSIPPI	842	728	37	765	77	6,280	2,810	3,440
MISSOURI	1,727	1,690	3	1,692	35	12,450	5,550	6,790
MONTANA	2,854	2,618	10	2,628	226	15,140	10,620	12,130
NEBRASKA	1,425	1,341	3	1,344	81	18,860	6,620	8,510
NEVADA	3	0	0	0	3	170	130	150
NEW HAMPSHIRE	0	0	0	0	0	20	10	10
NEW JERSEY	1	0	0	0	1	470	130	180
NEW MEXICO	483	482	0	482	1	1,910	1,719	1,910
NEW YORK	64	62	2	64	0	2,340	2,310	2,340
NORTH CAROLINA	151	144	1	145	6	5,690	1,470	2,040
NORTH DAKOTA	3,181	1,962	193	2,155	1,026	25,680	7,360	9,930
OHIO	377	263	62	325	52	10,550	6,660	7,160
OKLAHOMA	1,193	1,145	1	1,146	47	10,810	3,310	4,390
OREGON	531	464	0	464	67	3,200	1,180	1,500
PENNSYLVANIA	101	95	6	101	1	3,030	2,820	2,890
PUERTO RICO	0	na	na	na	na	280	na	na
RHODE ISLAND	0	0	0	0	0	10	3/	3/
SOUTH CAROLINA	278	168	1	169	109	3,030	340	640
SOUTH DAKOTA	2,120	956	129	1,085	1,035	16,020	3,800	5,400
TENNESSEE	476	458	3	461	16	4,040	2,470	2,870
TEXAS	4,150	3,134	40	3,174	976	31,630	13,750	16,910
UTAH	234	169	0	169	65	1,040	330	430
VERMONT	0	0	0	0	0	120	70	80
VIRGINIA	80	77	2	80	0	1,820	1,600	1,660
WASHINGTON	1,047	467	3	469	578	6,650	2,710	3,370
WEST VIRGINIA	1	0	0	0	1	200	160	170
WISCONSIN	747	583	91	674	73	7,800	5,450	5,900
WYOMING	257	230	0	230	27	1,180	810	930
U.S.	36,422	28,078	1,113	29,191	7,209	361,880	151,580	185,100

A zero entry means less than 500 acres.

1/ Criteria: EI≥8; located in a National conservation priority area; subject to scour erosion (frequent flooding, or occasional flooding with erosion treatment needed); cropped and associated upland buffer (2:1 ratio, half of upland otherwise eligible); within 66 feet of permanent water body; or lands needing toxic salt reduction.

2/ States will be able to designate up to 10 percent of their cropland as conservation priority areas.

3/ About 2,000 to 3,000 acres.